

Additions to the Biography of Pavel Vladimirovič Otockij (Based on Archival Materials from Prague and Stockholm)

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Sources from the archives in Prague and Stockholm raise some previously unknown facts regarding the life and activities of the eminent Russian soil scientist and hydrologist Pavel Otockij in 1920–40s, who emigrated from Russia in 1917. For the first time, the place and time of his death can be verified: Stockholm, 28th of May 1954.

Keywords: Pavel Otockij, soil science, hydrology, Stockholm, Prague, scholars in exile.

Pavel Vladimirovič Otockij (born 12 / 24.01.1866), a soil scientist and hydrologist, was a devoted disciple of Vasily Dokučaeв and a talented researcher. He is well-known for writing the most interesting and important works on the effect of forests on groundwater in the early 20th century¹, as the founder and director of the Soil Science Museum in St. Petersburg², as the founder, long time editor, and publisher (1899–1916) of the journal *Počvovedenie* (Soil Science)³, as well as co-organizing Dokučaeв's Soil Committee and serving as its vice-chair (1912–1917)⁴. Despite the fact that Otockij played such a significant role in the development and institutionalization of soil science in Russia his fate is little known: he went abroad in 1917 never to return to his motherland⁵.

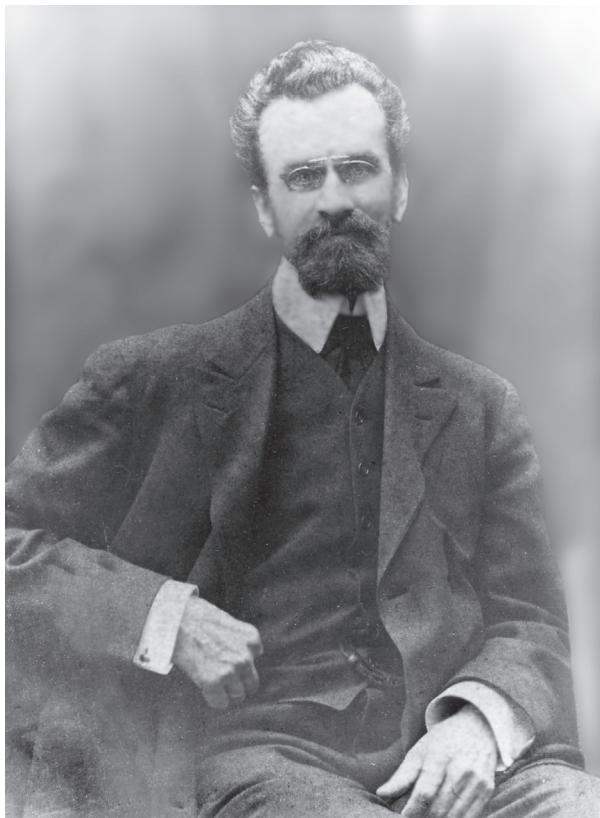
¹ Отоцкий, 1905. Moscow soil scientist and bibliographer of Russian soil science, Arseny Yarilov, described the book as following: "This research destroyed the centuries-old legend about the beneficial hydrological role of forests. Later, similar studies that used the Ototsky's method have been made in various other countries: in Germany (by prof. E. Ebermayer), in France (by prof. E. Henry), in India (by Pearson), in Sweden (by prof. H. Hesselmann), in Romania (by prof. G. Murgoci), etc. All of them confirmed the Otockij's results» (Ярилов 1922, с. 61).

² The first museum devoted to soil science in the world. It was created on the basis of Dokučaeв's collections and the collections of the Free Economical Society in 1902. Otockij was its head (without salary) up until 1912.

³ The first journal in soil science in the world. It was published until 1917 as a truly international journal, with an international editorial board, and with translations of Russian papers into one of the main scientific European languages.

⁴ See: Отоцкий, 1905; Колчинский, Федотова, 2011. Furthermore, since 1910 Otockij was the chairman of the Hydrological Commission of the Russian Geographical Society. Together with a hydrologist Andrey Stopnevich (1879–1919) he published the journal of the Commission *Гидрологический вестник* (Hydrological Bulletin, 1915–1916).

⁵ Otockij was sent to Sweden by the Russian Provisional Government and by the Academy of Sciences to collect cartographic material on the geological formations of Scandinavia for the new edition of the soil map of Russia, to explore the so called Nordensheld wells and to make a contract for printing of the journal



Pavel Otockij, the first half of the 1910s (St. Petersburg Soil Science Museum's Archive)

In the beginning of his exile, like many emigrants, he had the opportunity to communicate and liaise with his colleagues in Russia. In August 1918, Otockij was elected a corresponding member of the Agricultural Scientific committee of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture⁶. In the 1920s, he published some of his studies in Soviet journals⁷, but during the next decade these connections ceased. The soil science journals and biographical dictionaries of the Soviet period did not give any information about his life after 1917 and even the place and the year of his death were not known.

Some information about the life and the academic activities of Pavel Otockij after his emigration, as well as his contacts with Russian colleagues in the 1920s, was recently published (Матинян, Колодка, 2013). We have found some additional material from the archives in Prague and Stockholm that make his biography more complete.

Počvovedenie (Soil Science) in Sweden. But *Počvovedenie* was restored only in 1924 in Moscow, due to the activity of Arseny Yarilov, who became its new editor. The journal became completely Russian, the work of the international editorial board has not been renewed.

⁶ Центральный государственный архив научно-технической документации Санкт-Петербурга (Central State Archive of Scientific and Technical Documentation in St. Petersburg). Fond. 179. Opis. 1-1. № 34. P. 1–3. The Agricultural Scientific committee was a predecessor of the All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences (VASKhNIL).

⁷ See for example: Отоцкий, 1924.



Meeting of the Dokučev's Soil Committee, Otockij in the midth
(St. Petersburg Soil Science Museum's Archive)

We started our research in the former Czechoslovakia, where Otockij lectured at the Free University in Prague. It had been speculated that his death occurred in Prague in 1931, 1933, or during the years of the Second World War. However, the information found in the archives of the Czechoslovak police⁸ turned out to be a gold mine and forced us to follow his movements to Stockholm. Information from the Swedish State Migration Commission (Statens Utlänningskommission, The National Archives, Sweden)⁹ made the picture complete.

Pavel Otockij (Paul Ototzky in Swedish documents) lived in Stockholm with his family from 1917 to 1920. Their daughter, Iréne (Dolly) Paulowna Ototzky, was born on December 12, 1918. It is noteworthy that Iréne stayed in Sweden when the rest of the family left the country in 1920¹⁰. According to the documents from the Archive of the Russian Academy

⁸ Národní archiv České Republiky, Policejní ředitelství Praha II–1931–1940. Kartón 8190, Signatura O 498/3 Otockij Pavel 1866.

⁹ Riksarkivet. State Aliens Commission (Statens Utlänningskommission, kanslibyrån volume F 1 B:1856; D 1 A:69.

¹⁰ Iréne Ototzky received Swedish citizenship in 1937 (Riksarkivet. Justitiedepartementet, konseljakt 8 January 1937 No. 26), in 1948 she married Sten Nordenskjöld. She died in 2004 (Sveriges Dödbok. 1901–2009. Sveriges Släktforskarförbund).

of Sciences, the Otockijs' financial condition in Sweden was far from favourable and this might explain why they left their small daughter¹¹.

Based on the documentation of the Czechoslovak police, Pavel Otockij arrived in Czechoslovakia on the 2nd of March, 1922 and, according to the information, he had spent time in Sweden and Germany after his emigration from Russia.

In Prague Otockij lectured on the natural sciences at the Free University in Prague, mainly to Russian emigrant students. According to Otockij's own description (passport application, filed in 1946), he was invited to Czechoslovakia by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1926, he finalized the second volume of his monograph on ground waters and the book was published in the Czech language (Otockij, 1926).

Pavel Otockij visited Sweden and his younger daughter at least in 1921, 1923, and 1931. At least once he visited Iréne with his older daughter, Elena (born 6 December, 1906). In addition to the journeys to Sweden, Otockij often travelled to Brussels, Belgium in the 1920s where his wife lived until her death in 1929.

Otockij's visa to Sweden was denied at least once. This took place in September 1944, but after the war he travelled to Stockholm again. In 1946 he received a one-year visa to Sweden and lived there between December 18, 1946 and December 14, 1947, when he returned to Czechoslovakia. In documents filed for his visa in 1946 he indicated that he was a widower, a retired professor, that he was preparing a third volume on ground waters, and that he wanted to study the Nordenskiöld's wells in Sweden.

On July 29, 1949, Otockij arrived in Sweden for the last time. It is indicated in the documents of the Czechoslovak police that he went to live at his daughter's (Irena Nordenskjöld) house. He died in Stockholm on May 28, 1954.

Acknowledgements

We express our deep gratitude to Dr. Elena Rusakova for providing us with Otockij's photos and Eric Michael Johnson for his considerable help in polishing our English in this paper.

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[*Ярилов А.А.*] Personalis. П.В. Отоцкий // Русский почвовед. 1922. № 1–3. С. 61–62.

¹¹ St. Petersburg Branch of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Fond 80. Opis. 1. № 94, 96. See also: Матинян, Колодка, 2013.

К биографии Павла Владимировича Отоцкого (по материалам архивов Праги и Стокгольма)

АНАСТАСИЯ ФЕДОТОВА, ЮССИ-ПЕККА ХАКАРАЙНЕН, ЛАРС ХАЛЬБЕРГ

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По материалам архивов Праги и Стокгольма приведены ранее неизвестные сведения о жизни в 1920–40-х гг. крупного почвовед и гидрогеолога П.В. Отоцкого, в 1917 г. эмигрировавшего из России. Впервые приводится документально обоснованные дата и место его смерти: Стокгольм, 28 мая 1954 г.

Ключевые слова: П.В. Отоцкий, Стокгольм, Прага, почвоведение, гидрология, ученые в эмиграции.